DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 291 EA 012 722

AUTHOR Gress, James R.
TITLE Managing School Curriculum/Program/System Change: Initial Identification of Criteria.
PUB DATE Nov 79
NOTE 21p.: Some tables may not reproduce clearly due to small print.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Change Strategies; *Criteria; *Curriculum Development; *Diffusion; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Innovation; Tables (Data); Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Influence

ABSTRACT

Five empirically based literature sources that identify variables potentially associated with successful implementation of curriculum change are synthesized and identified in a lengthy summary table. Some initial generalizations made from the literature sources are summarized. Curricula that are responsive to real local problems and do not deviate significantly from local value systems appear to be more successfully implemented than others. Teachers of relatively greater professional experience and competence probably change professional behaviors more easily than others. Consistency between change system characteristics and community expectations appears to facilitate curriculum change. Curriculum change is optimized in positive or supportive environments. And finally, curriculum implementation can be facilitated only when adequate time, materials, staff, and fiscal resources exist, when the change involved is a high priority, and when needed resources have been identified and allocated. (Author/MLF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED188291

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

MANAGING SCHOOL CURRICULUM/PROGRAM/SYSTEM CHANGE: INITIAL IDENTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

James R. Gress
The University of Toledo

November, 1979

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. R. Gress

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 012 722

The problem of change in school curriculums and instructional programs is not new. Professor Peddiwell (1939) has related efforts of our paleolithic ancestors in addressing the problem. The problem has been central to the curriculum field since its beginnings in the United States early in this century (Gress and Purpel, 1978, pp. 449-464).

What may be "new" in this regard is a broadened perspective which allows us to identify curriculum and instructional change (and school innovation more generally) as an interrelated but nonetheless discrete sequence of steps, namely, planning, adoption, implementation (or diffusion), and maintenance. Our perspective has been broadened, in large measure, as a result of attempts during the past decade or two at changing school curriculums and instructional programs on a national scale, supported primarily by massive expenditures of federal funds. Our perspective has been sharpened by more recent attempts to explain reported failures to impact schools as intended as, for example, Goodlad, (1977; et al, 1970) reports and, to a much lesser extent, by some observed successes.

The principal subject of this presentation is successful implementation of curriculum and instructional program change. Our purpose here is to identify and describe variables associated with successful implementation which, in turn, can provide valid bases for constructing change management plans.

Literature Sources

There is not a dearth of professional literature which addresses the problem of curriculum change. A plethora of principles and prescriptions, albeit most often dealing only with the planning process, can be identified. A much more scarce commodity is descriptive literature, based on empirical research, which identifies variables potentially associated with successful

curriculum (change) implementation.

This presentation is based on some synthesizing of literature of the latter kind drawn from five sources: (1) an early literature survey by Gress (1973), (2) an extensive review of research by Fullan and Pomfret (1977), (3) reported findings of national evaluations of the federally-supported Teacher Corps experience (Fox, 1977), (4) two comprehensive studies of other federally-supported change efforts (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; 1979), and (5) a recent report presented to the Toledo Public Schools (Heller, 1979). The first survey was comprehensive; it reviews published and unpublished works including, for example, the early findings of Saylor (1941) in this regard. Fullan and Pomfret's comprehensive work reviews a vast literature produced in the first seven or eight years of the current decade. Fox (1977) analyzed six major Teacher Corps evaluation projects; Gorman (1979) has summarized that work. The Rand studies investigated factors affecting implementation and continuation in a federal program supporting educational change as well as the process of planned change in urban school districts; the latter work is summarized by Pincus and Williams (1979). Heller's literature review examines findings of eight recent evaluations of curriculum change efforts.

Principal limitations of most of the source material summarized and, to some extent, synthesized here are: (1) an overreliance on reported observation and perception, and (2) an absence of specific operational definitions both for implementation and for the identified variables related to it. Nevertheless, the literature utilized includes the most sophisticated efforts to date to overcome these limitations, and it identifies at least some gross indicators for further consideration and study.

Implementation Variables

The variables related to successful innovation implementation (diffusion)

in school curriculums and instructional programs are identified in the inserted summary table. The table has been organized by the following categories:

1. Design of the Plan.
2. Teacher as Unit of Implementation.
   - 2.1 General Characteristics.
   - 2.2 Relationship to Engineering Systems.
3. Engineering Systems.
   - 3.1 General Characteristics.
   - 3.2 Teacher Roles/Relationships.
   - 3.3 Other Roles/Relationships.
4. Environmental Conditions.
5. Other Resources.

Some attempt has been made as well to synthesize findings of the several identified literature sources. Some initial generalizations can facilitate further consideration in this regard.

The Plan. Curriculums (Read throughout: changed curriculums or instructional programs and other school innovations) which are responsive to real local problems and which do not deviate significantly from local value systems appear to be more successfully implemented than others, especially if they are accompanied by local adaptation of materials. Further, explicit change proposals which involve managable sets of goals and which are not overly complex probably gain wider use than others. Finally, consistency with modern philosophical and psychological educational prescriptions seems to characterize successful change proposals though this latter finding may be, to a greater extent, a product of historical circumstance.

The Teacher. Some teachers probably are more open to change than others.

Criteria for School Curriculum/Program/System Change: A Summary of the Literature

Criteria Category	Literature Source				
	Gress	Pomfret and Fullan	Teacher Corps	Rand	Heller
1. Design of the Plan	1.1 Changes consistent with local tradition/mores				
	1.2 Non-controversial subject-matter content				
		1.3 Explicitness (who, what, when, how)			
		1.4 Response to real local problem		1.4 Locally-developed materials	1.41 Responsive to identified student needs
					1.42 Local materials developed
		1.5 Low level of complexity			1.5 Manageable set of goals/objectives
					1.6 Integrated evaluation scheme
					1.7 Focus on learning processes versus specific subject-matter content
					1.8 Focus on basic reading and mathematics skills

	Gress	Pomfret and Fullan	Teacher Corps	Rand	Heller
					1.9 Instructional emphasis on "concrete operations"
2. Teacher as Unit of Implementation					
2.1 General Characteristics	2.11 Psychological security				
	2.12 Professional experience/ tenure				
	2.13 Positive professional attidue	2.13 Positive morale			2.13 Positive attidue
	2.14 Subject-matter competence	2.14 Competence in innovation use			
					2.15 Personalized relationships with students
2.2 Relationship to Engineering Systems	2.21 Recognition of need for change	2.21 Coincidental value orientation			
	2.22 Participation in planning/ evaluation activities	2.221 Participation in planning/implementation decision-making		2.22 Involvement in planning	
		2.222 Active participation in development/construction activities			

Gress	Pomfret and Pullan	Teacher Corps	Rand	Heller
2.23 Perception of influentialness in planning processes				
2.24 Construction of appropriate materials				
2.25 Understanding of implementation role(s)		2.25 Consistency of role expectations		
	2.26 Participation in in-service training		2.26 Concrete, specific and extended in-service training	
	2.27 Continuing teacher-consultant interaction			
		2.28 Self-initiated contacts with parents		
			2.29 Observations in other classrooms of innovation in use	
3. Engineering Systems				
3.1 General Characteristics			3.11 Delivery system consistent with local community traditions, expectations	

	Gress	Pomfret and Fullan	Teacher Corps	Rand	Heller
				3.12 Regular, on-going implementation meetings	
					3.13 Communications/ coordination among school, home, community
					3.14 System of follow-up, feedback, and renewal provided
3.2 Teacher Roles/ Relationships (Sec. 2.2)					
3.3 Other Roles/ Relationships	3.31 Leadership initiative			3.31 Recognition of propitiousness for change and leadership initiative	
	3.32 Supportive administrator (principal) behaviors	3.321 Superintendent support	3.321 Principal leadership	3.321 Principal participation in training activities	3.321 Administrator respect for teacher professionalism
		3.322 Active principal support	3.322 Principal leadership	3.322 Principal participation in training activities	3.322 Sensitive principal behaviors
	3.33 Supportive consultant/ supervisor behaviors	3.33 Consultant feedback		3.33 "On call" district staff consultants with relevant, practical advice	3.331 Prior identification of coordinator

	Gress	Pomfret and Fullan	Teacher Corps	Rand	Heller
					3.332 Systematic, on-going in-service training and follow-up
					3.333 Supportive other staff, e.g., department chairs
		3.34 Frequent staff interaction			
		3.35 Peer feedback			
			3.36 Competent inter-institutional boundary personnel		
					3.37 Parents involved in planning/implementation
					3.38 Students involved in planning
					3.39 All role behaviors explicitly defined
4. Environmental Considerations	4.1 Community support			4.1 Absence of crisis in district; minimum community support	

	Gress	Pomfret and Fullan	Teacher Corps	Rand	Heller
		4.2 Openness/trust between implementors and sponsors/advocates			4.2 Mutual respect among teachers, students, community members
		4.3 Incentive system consistent with implementation (diffusion) versus adoption			
			4.4 Supportive/responsive school organizational structure		4.4 Flexible applications of school "rules"
				4.5 Gradual emergence of district-wide enthusiasm/ sense of accomplishment	
				4.6 Limited district capacity/ sustenance of innovativeness	
5. Other Resources	5.1 Adequate time	5.1 Adequate time (two-year minimum)			
	5.2 Adequate financial resources				5.2 Adequate resources

Gress	Pomfret and Fullan	Teacher Corps	Rand	Heller
	5.3 Adequate materials			
	5.4 High priority vis-a-vis other district agendae			5.4 Construction of resource allocation plan
				5.5 Addition of support personnel, e.g., paraprofessionals, aides

Teachers of relatively greater professional experience and competence who exhibit positive self-concepts and generally positive professional outlooks probably change professional behaviors more easily than others. In addition, the teacher's relationship to the planning, implementation, and evaluation systems apparently can be enhanced in ways which support change, e.g., need recognition, participation, coincidence of value orientation, and interaction with peers, parents, and consultants.

The Engineering Systems. Consistency between engineering systems characteristics and community expectations appears to facilitate curriculum change. Open communication among school and community constituents as well as appropriate feedback and renewal mechanisms may facilitate greater consistency.

In addition to the teacher, appropriate relationships with curriculum engineering systems need to be established by local leaders, the school superintendent, the building principal (especially), other line and staff administrators, students, parents, and other community members in order to facilitate identified change. Individuals whose roles provide links between schools and other institutions supporting change are important in this regard as well.

The Environment. Curriculum change is optimized in positive or supportive environments (or climates), including those extant in the individual classroom, the school building, the school district, and the community. There may be some times in each case which are more propitious for change than others, and in urban communities, propitiousness may be cyclical and a function of the prior fulfillment of other needs, e.g., fiscal security. In addition, implementation can be facilitated by responsive incentive systems.

Other Resources. Curriculum implementation can be facilitated only when

adequate time, materials, staff, and fiscal resources exist, when the change involved is a high priority, and when needed resources have been identified and allocated.

Concluding Observations

Curriculum implementation is a multivariate phenomenon. Successful management of school innovation, including changing curriculum and instructional programs, necessitates systematic attention to a series of steps, including implementation or diffusion. Successful management of implementation and maintenance also necessitates systematic attention to several variables which the professional literature has begun to identify.

References

Berman, Paul and Milbrey W. McLaughlin. An exploratory study of school district adaptation. Santa Monica: Rand Corp., 1979.

_____. Factors affecting implmentation and continuation, Federal programs supporting educational change, 6. Santa Monica: Rand Corp., 1978.

Fox, G. Thomas, Jr. Limitations of a standard perspective on program evaluation: the example of ten years of Teacher Corps evaluations. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1977.

Fullan, Michael and Alan Pomfret. Research on curriculum and instruction implementation, Review of Educational Research, 47:335-397, Winter, 1977.

Goodlad, John I. What goes on in our schools, Educational Researcher, 6:341-358, 1977.

Goodlad, John I. et al. Looking behind the classroom door. Columbus, O.: Charles A. Jones, 1970.

Gorman, Charles J. Documenting, analyzing, and decision-making. Philadelphia: Mid-Atlantic Teacher Corps Network, 1979.

Gress, James R. An experimental study of the effects of teacher participation in a curriculum engineering task on dimensions of curriculum implementation. Paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, 1973.

Gress, James R. and David E. Purpel (eds.). Curriculum: An introduction to the field. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1978.

Heller, Mary F. The process of curriculum development: An overview of the research. Paper presented to the Toledo Public Schools. Toledo: The University of Toledo, Center for Educational Research and Services, 1979.

Peddiwell, J. Abner (Pseud.). The sabertooth curriculum. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1939.

Pincus, John and Richard C. Williams. Planned change in urban school districts, Phi Delta Kappan, 60:729-733, June, 1979.

Saylor, J. Galen. Factors associated with participation in cooperative programs of curriculum development. New York: Teachers College Press, 1941.